



**Mecklenburg County  
Area Mental Health  
Authority**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MECKLENBURG ADVOCATE NAMED TO STATE MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD, WINS VOLUNTEER AWARD**

**CHARLOTTE, NC** -- Sandy DuPuy, a volunteer who works with the Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health Authority (AMHA), has been appointed to an advisory board that will help guide the state through extensive mental health care reform over the next few years.

DuPuy will be one of 20 volunteers on the State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC). She currently chairs the Mecklenburg County CFAC, which assists the Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health Authority (AMHA) in developing policy for its clients or "consumers."

As a member of the state CFAC group, DuPuy will provide direct input as the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services carries out sweeping change that will alter how public mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability services are delivered.

"I am honored to be appointed to the State CFAC," DuPuy said recently. "Giving voice to the issues that consumers and their families face is a privilege and a responsibility that I take very seriously. This is the first committee of its kind in the country, and it will be an exciting challenge to create a true partnership of professionals and consumers working together at that level of government."

In a separate recognition, DuPuy recently won a 2004 Leadership Award from the N.C. Council of Community Programs, an organization focused on helping the state's community mental health programs become more effective and efficient. The award is based on contributions to issues pertaining to mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse.

She began her involvement with Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health programs about 30 years ago, after learning one of her daughters, adopted at six weeks old, had severe cerebral palsy, mild retardation and a speech disorder.

DuPuy learned to be a vocal advocate for her child's needs, and eventually, became a voice for other parents and children dealing with similar issues.

Beginning in 1994, she served for six years on the Mecklenburg County Human Services Council, an advisory board to the county commissioners. She was chair of the Council's Health/Mental Health Committee for five of those years.



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As Mecklenburg County CFAC chairperson, DuPuy and the other 12 volunteer committee members play a major role in shaping Area Mental Health Authority policies. The group, made up of AMHA clients, former clients and client family members, is also assisting AMHA with carrying out the state's reform plan.

Under that plan, community programs that offer public mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services must privatize and contract out most services that they currently provide in-house using county employees. Mecklenburg is ahead in the state reform efforts, with about 70 percent of its services already contracted to private providers.

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